You're not licensed to thrill: Pakistan bans new movie by Bollywood's James Bond

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His name is Vinod ... Agent Vinod. He can shoot two pistols simultaneously while diving through the air, disarm nuclear weapons and drive sports cars at terrifying speeds through narrow streets without breaking sweat.

But despite his many talents, India's answer to James Bond has been unable to find his way into cinemas in neighbouring Pakistan.

The highly anticipated Bollywood blockbuster, Agent Vinod, named after the film's central character, was scheduled to open last week in Lahore and Karachi, but Pakistan's Film Censor Board, has banned the film for its negative portrayal of the country's intelligence agency, the ISI.

"It was our judgment that it should not be allowed to be screened," the vice-chairman of the board, Muhammad Ashraf Gondal, told the Associated Press. "It falls under the negative codes of our censor."

The ban marks the latest cultural battle in a cold war between the two nuclear-armed countries that has occasionally erupted into violence – animosity is rarely far from the surface.

Pakistan and India were founded in 1947 after the break up of the British empire. Since then, they have fought three major wars, two of them over the disputed territory of Kashmir. The ISI is accused of sponsoring Islamist groups who have carried out attacks against its neighbour, and many believe it still maintains support for the Taliban in an effort to counter Indian influence.

It is against this backdrop of suspicion and covert war that the film is set. Agent Vinod, a spy from India's Research and Analysis Wing, travels to Morocco, Moscow and Afghanistan in an attempt to prevent the detonation of a nuclear bomb in his country. The film shows Pakistani officials encouraging terror attacks in India and financing Lashkar-e-Taiba, a militant group founded with the ISI's support in the 1990s, which is focused on pressuring India to give up Kashmir.

Despite the controversy about the film, the actor who plays Vinod rejected claims that it gave an unfair portrayal. "If you feel this is unreasonable or not true, then it is fair enough," Saif Ali Khan said in an interview with the Indo-Asian News Service. "I think it is all quite true."

Khan, 41, who also co-produced the movie, added: "Agent Vinod is for Indians but it is not against Pakistanis. But I understand if they get upset because we are beating them up quite often in the film."

Agent Vinod is not the first Bollywood film to be prohibited in Pakistan. The government banned all Indian movies in 1965 after a war between the countries.

It lifted the measure in 2008 but has continued to block certain films. It banned an Indian comedy about Osama bin Laden in 2010, claiming it could spark terror attacks.